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SUBJECT      Statements of Soviet Minister Solod  
              Concerning the Middle East Situation

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1. During the week of 12-19 December 1948 Soviet Minister Daniel Solod stopped on his way from Beirut to Damascus at the home of Salah Bey Bayyum in Shtawra (which, source states, is a meeting place used frequently by Soviet Legation officials and Communists, as Bayyum has been proved to be loyal to the Soviets). While in Shtawra, Solod is reported to have said, "The Soviet Republics sympathize with the forty million Arabs who do not know where they are going, and who are blindly following the imperialistic policies of Britain and America," who, he stated, were "putting their hands on the immense resources that nature had bestowed on the Arabs." Solod also said, "It is regrettable that the Arab rulers and people do not have the courage to settle their account with Britain. They are like the Russian peasants during the Tsarist regime. The Arabs have lost the greatest cause in their history through British policy. Yet, despite this, we see them proud of their friendship for Britain. This loss may not stop here; the policy they are following will cost them their independence and the lives of their children and their grandchildren. They will, one day, be fuel for an internecine war. We find Syria and Lebanon marching, despite the propitious circumstances and despite their enviable independence, along the road to loss of the freedom and independence which we helped them obtain. We warn them and their people of the calamities which the weakness of their rulers will bring them."
2. Solod then went on to say that the Arabs still have a good chance to save themselves, in view of the dissatisfaction of the Arab people with the Anglo-American policy toward the Palestine question, and of the international circumstances which are in the favor of the Arabs, if they desire to benefit from them. Solod stated that the present was the time for fighting British imperialism if the Arabs really wanted freedom and independence. "We are ready," Solod stated, "to extend full assistance to the Arabs in the various fields. We only seek the welfare of the Arabs, and our policy aims at liberating the peoples and granting them independence."

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3. On 23 December a delegation from Homs, composed of Dr. Nasib Jundi, President of the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union; Elias Tarabulsi; Philip Andrawas; and Muhammad Qasim, visited the Soviet Legation in Beirut to greet Minister Solod on his return from the Soviet Union. Dr. Jundi protested the suppression of his Society by the Syrian Government "without justification." Solod replied that such is the policy of the imperialistic powers which control the weaker nations, but that the time would come when Lebanon and Syria would "choose the principle which will fit their temperament."
4. On 25 December 1948 Dr. Dhiya-al-Din Jundi, Soviet propagandist from Damascus; Bahjat Baghdash, brother of Khalid Baghdash; and Tawfiq Bey, the former Circassian commander, visited the Soviet Legation in Beirut to welcome Solod back to Lebanon. Dr. Jundi told [REDACTED] that Solod had assured him that the tense situation would not last long in the Middle East. Solod felt that the situation had been created by the failure of the Arabs to defy imperialism. 25X1X6
- C-3 5. Sheikh Khalil Taqi-al-Din, the Lebanese Director of National Defense and former Lebanese Minister to Moscow; Arif Quraytin; Dr. George Hanna; and Antun Tabit had dinner on Christmas day at the Soviet Legation. During the course of the conversation, Solod stated that he was pleased that the Lebanese Government and people had not implicated themselves in the Palestine fighting, and that the Lebanese army had been spared; Solod praised President Khuri's wisdom in this matter.

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